

REMARKS

Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the present application in view of the foregoing amendments and in view of the reasons that follow.

Claims 2, 4, 15, 17, 25 and 27 are requested to be cancelled.

Claims 1, 3, 14, 16, 24 and 26 are currently being amended.

This amendment adds, changes and/or deletes claims in this application. A detailed listing of all claims that are, or were, in the application, irrespective of whether the claim(s) remain under examination in the application, is presented, with an appropriate defined status identifier.

After amending the claims as set forth above, claims 1, 3, 5-14, 16, 18-24, 26 and 28-35 are now pending in this application.

Applicant notes with appreciation, the Examiner's indication that claims 4, 17 and 27 would be allowable, if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitation of the base claim and any intervening claims. Accordingly, claims 1, 14 and 24 are amended herein to be identical to an independent version of claims 4, 17, and 27 (including all of the limitations of intervening claims 2, 15 and 25, respectively). Thus, as amended, claims 1, 14 and 24 are believed to be allowable.

Claims 1, 2, 5, 7, 8, 10, 24, 25, 28, 30, 31 and 35 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,168,646 to May. Claims 3, 6, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 19, 22, 23, 26, 29 and 32-34 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over May in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,920,026 to Yoshino et al. In view of the above amendments to independent claims 1, 14 and 24, these rejections are believed to be moot.

In particular, independent claim 1 is amended herein to include the limitations of claim 4 and intervening claim 2. Because claim 4 was not included in the above rejections (and, in fact, was identified by the Examiner as allowable), it is respectfully submitted that claim 1, as amended herein to include the limitations of claim 4, is also allowable.

Similarly, independent claim 14 is amended herein to include the limitations of claim 17 and intervening claim 15. Because claim 17 was not included in the above rejections (and, in fact, was identified by the Examiner as allowable), it is respectfully submitted that claim 14, as amended herein to include the limitations of claim 17, is also allowable.

Also similarly, independent claim 24 is amended herein to include the limitations of claim 27 and intervening claim 25. Because claim 27 was not included in the above rejections (and, in fact, was identified by the Examiner as allowable), it is respectfully submitted that claim 24, as amended herein to include the limitations of claim 27, is also allowable.

As no further rejections or objections have been raised, Applicant believes that the present application is now in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration of the application as amended is respectfully requested.

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone if it is felt that a telephone interview would advance the prosecution of the present application.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required regarding this application under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16-1.17, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 50-0872. Should no proper payment be enclosed herewith, as by a check being in the wrong amount, unsigned, post-dated, otherwise improper or informal or even entirely missing, the Commissioner is authorized to charge the unpaid amount to Deposit Account No. 50-0872. If any extensions of time are needed for timely acceptance of papers submitted herewith, Applicant hereby petitions for such extension under 37 C.F.R. §1.136 and authorizes payment of any such extensions fees to Deposit Account No. 50-0872.

Respectfully submitted,

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